

Testimony of Liz Dupont-Diehl

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February 21, 2023 HB 991 AN ACT CONCERNING MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS - IN SUPPORT

and SB 6587 AN ACT CONCERNING MEDICAID COVERAGE FOR DIAPERS - IN SUPPORT

Good afternoon Senator Lesser, Representative Gilchrest, and other members of the Committee, my name is Liz Dupont-Diehl and I am the Associate Director of the Connecticut Citizen Action Group (CCAG). On behalf of our thousands of members I want to thank you for raising **SB 991 AN ACT CONCERNING MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS** and **SB 6587 AN ACT CONCERNING MEDICAID COVERAGE FOR DIAPERS**. We support both bills, as accessible and very reasonable first steps in addressing inequalities and ensuring people in CT have the foundational resources to survive.

CCAG is part of the Recovery for All Coalition, (RFA) which rightly points out that Connecticut's cost of living is the eighth highest in the country. Connecticut is ranked as having the 5th largest wealth gap in the country.

First, **HB 991, An Act Concerning Medicaid Reimbursement for Community Health Workers**. Community health workers are known to be extremely effective in conveying critical health and wellness information and resources - yet healthcare providers struggle to fund these critical positions, often relying on grants which are inherently time-limited. COVID has brought home the need for ALL people in Connecticut to receive timely health information, and connection to resources, in ways that they understand.

I will reference the testimony of our partners at Health Equity Solutions for strong evidence of Community Health Workers' effectiveness in improving health outcomes. The fact that our health care facilities must continually seek grant funding for these essential resources is a sad fact and evidence that we as a state can't claim to have a health care "system." Covering Community Health Workers under Medicaid will provide essential services to thousands and yield significant and immediate returns in better health and productivity.

Re: **SB 6587 AN ACT CONCERNING MEDICAID COVERAGE FOR DIAPERS**. We fully support testimony and data from the [Diaper Bank of Connecticut](#) on the stress and damage caused by people struggling to pay for diapers and related products on low and limited incomes. Some 80,000 people would be covered under this change. The health-related benefits to children and mothers, their ability to attend work and school and child care, are all well documented and will prevent other costs down the road.

In closing, Connecticut residents suffer from some of the worst racial, economic, and gender inequities in the country. CCAG also fully supports RFA's equity agenda, calling for more balance in our tax system. Re: HB 991, we further encourage you to also explore the profits, stock buybacks, executive compensation and other obscene profiteering occurring in our healthcare system, draining money from care and leading to a continual scramble for resources, lack of coordination of care, stress for all involved, worse health outcomes and continued disparities.

We fully support these two bills as effective ways to begin to address these inequities and provide immediate and needed improvements in people's health, wellness and ability to flourish. Both are critical steps morally and also fiscally. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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